MINUTEMAN, Lexington, MA - Aug. 27, 1981 CR: B. Greenwood

Scientist won't discount close encounters

By Catherine Enns

A central Massachusetts housewife is kidnapped one winter night by a group of "beings," is taken on board a spaceship and whisked off on a strange journey to another planet where she has what she describes as "religious experience."

It is the stuff hit movies are made of, but for David Webb, it is only one encounter in a catalogue of more than 2,000 that he keeps for the Mutual UFO Network, Inc., an international civilian organization which scientifically investigates sightings of unidentified flying objects.

Webb, who lives in Burlington, is probably one of the most knowledgeable persons on this planet when it comes to CE-3s, or, in the popular vernacular, close encounters of the third kind. A senior scientist for American Science and Engineering in Arlington, Webb has independently studied UFOs for 20 years.

His interest began in the 1960s, when he was associated with the Aerial Phenomenon Research Association, one of the earliest UFO study organizations concerned with what Webb calls "alleged entities."

Later that decade, he met Ted Bloecher, a New York City resident who was also studying humanoid encounters. The two men became co-chairmen of MUFON's humanoid study group and began compiling a computer catalogue of reported encounters.

Interestingly, of the 2,200 entries in their catalogue, about 12 percent of those cases are what Webb refers to as "Type-G" cases — people who reported having been taken on a spacecraft by beings.

"About one-half of those reports have had some degree of reliable investigation," said Webb. "The reports date back to the 1940s, but most of them occurred in the '60s and '70s and in 1979 about half the cases reported were Type-G. It could mean this type of behavior is increasing, but it might also mean that the public in general has become more excited about this and is willing to report it more frequently."

One of the most fascinating investigations Webb participated in was the report of the central Massachusects housewife.

It was a January night in 1967, a year in which Webb says there were an extraordinarly large number of sightings in Massachusetts and the world in general. The woman was in her kitchen when a group of "three to four" beings came into the house.

The woman's mother and father and daughter also gave detailed reports of the encounter with creatures. The woman said the leader of the beings conversed telepathically with her and convinced her to go on board their craft.

"She was hesitant to go on board, but it seemed they overcame her will," said Webb. The woman reported she went through a three-hour induction period in which she was given a physical examination.

"She went on a rather strange journey, possibly to another planet, where she had what can best be described as a religious experience. She was brought back in the craft and then released," he said.

The woman remembered the initial encounter in the kitchen, but had no conscious memories of her time in the spacecraft, Webb said. When Webb began the investigation into the occurrence in 1978, the woman underwent 12 hypnosis sessions and reported her experience in the craft.

Webb admits that he knows the uncertainties of information received under hypnosis, but noted that the method at least provides the investigator with more information on the case.

"Usually the person has a feeling that there is something more that happpened — that there is something else that has to come out. Oftentimes, it confirms a missing period of time: a person who is driving down a road and suddenly comes to at a point further down the road; or a person who is finds that one or two hours have passed without explanation. This happens fairly frequently," Webb said.

Webb is currently investigating an early 1970s occurrence on the South Shore. A woman who dropped off newspaper bundles for carriers and often had to drive along lonely back roads early in the morning reported a series of encounters over a period of about a month.

"In her first encounter, she was driving on a road in a wooded area and saw red lights which seemed to approach the car and then go away. She didn't think a whole lot about it then," Webb said.

But as she was driving along the same area days later, an object landed in the woods and a group of beings on "rotating flat platforms elevated off the ground" came toward the car. The woman panicked and rolled up the windows and locked the door.

"She said she felt communication for her to open the door and she wouldn't. Suddenly, all four doors flew upen automatically. One of the beings came over and touched her in the back of the neck, where later a couple of marks appeared that she couldn't explain," Webb said. The woman then passed out. She believes she was kidnapped and taken aboard the craft.

Under hypnosis, Webb said the people who claim to have close encounters describe a common scenario.

They describe going through physical examinations, and report similarities in the lighting of the craft and the type of machinery on board. Webb said telepathic communication is commonly reported and that the beings talk only in generalities and go about their work mechanically.

The beings people describe are also similar, Webb said.

They are usually short in stature, between three and five feet tall, with large heads and "spindly" arms and legs.

"Their skin is described as being a whitish or grayish tone and they wear tight-fitting one-piece garments that start at the neck area," he said. The beings' eyes are described as "cat-shaped or oriental-like."

Webb said the creatures have no ears or very small ears with a slit for a mouth that usually doesn't move and a couple of holes for a nose. The beings' fingers are usually covered by mittens or gloves, but individuals who claim they have seen them say they have three or four fingers with a large thumb. Their fingers are often long, but some witnesses describe them as being chubby.

Webb is hesitant to theorize why creatures from other planets would want to contact human beings. His scientific background allows him to concede only that "we may be visited by extra-terrestrial beings."

But he says that through his investigations and extensive interviews, he has reason to believe that some people may be "selected" for observation by the beings because they report having several encounters during their lives.

"It is possible that it could be a training or early education exercise that could encompass the whole human race," he said. "What we are studying is just the tip of the iceberg."

Webb, who works in solar astronomy and has worked on a contractual basis for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, said he has kept "a very low profile" in his UFO work because of the skepticism he has met from the scientific community.

"But I feel very encouraged that more and more scientists and engineers are saying that they are interested in the subject and are willing to work in the area," he said.

Webb feels that once scientists begin questioning witnesses, they will become more open to the "bizarre aspects of the phenomenon" such as humanoid encounters.

8-27-81
MUFON